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ABSTRACT

Lifelong learning has a long tradition in India. In the last century, the government has accepted adult education as its responsibility. Since 1977, the University Grants Commission has incorporated adult and continuing education and extension into its policies, converted the Cells for Adult Education into full-fledged University Departments of Adult and Continuing Education and Extension, and formed a Review Committee for Extension to give strategies for institutionalization of extension. Extension departments have been asked to eradicate illiteracy in communities adopted by colleges and conduct continuing education on a regular basis. Current efforts focus on financial support to universities for nonformal education, redesignation of core academic staff as teachers, and staff development. Universities must work for the promotion of social change and development and play an active role in promoting adult learning. The Department of Adult and Continuing Education and Extension of the University of Mumbai exemplifies moderate success achieved in translating policy into practice. It pursues two goals: institutionalization of extension and creation of a nonformal stream of education. The Department proposes to work on the development of an institution where any individual can join for education at any level from literacy to the Open University. (Contains 17 references.) (YLB)

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BY
Dr. Renuka Narang

July 1997

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Renuka Narang is at present the Director, Department of Adult and Continuing Education and Extension, University of Mumbai. She graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Pharmacy from the University's Department of Chemical Technology securing a first class and ranking second in the University. Her teaching career began in 1969 as a helper-teacher in the science laboratory of a high-school in the metropolis of Bombay. In 1972 she completed the Bachelor's Degree in Education with a first class, ranking among the first twenty successful candidates in the University of Mumbai. By 1976 she was appointed as a Principal of a Public School in Nagpur. She worked for her doctorate degree under the guidance of late Dr. Madhuriben Shah, Chairman, University Grants Commission. Dr. Narang has also been a pioneer in organizing an international level continuing education course for nurses. In 1986 she was appointed to her present post as Director. In the 1987 she initiated the establishment of the first Jana Shikshan Nilayam (Community Education Centre) in the country and in 1988 an experiment in training 'Community Educators' was carried out by the Department under her guidance.

Subsequently the Department was able to introduce Project Work in Extension and succeed in its acceptance in the Bachelor of Education Degree programme i.e. at the preservice level of Teacher Education. Dr. Narang was instrumental for the introduction of Project work in Goa and Nagpur Universities also.

Another milestone in her career was the establishment of a Women's Cell under her department which helped to bring gender issues into focus in the University.

In 1992 the University Grants Commission in recognition of the work of the Department nominated it as the Nodal Agency for the states of Maharashtra and Goa. Recently a review of the work of the Department as a Nodal Agency by the University Grants Commission has drawn appreciation of the leadership role exhibited by the Department under her.

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INDIAN UNIVERSITIES AND THE FUTURE OF ADULT EDUCATION IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

PART - I

INTRODUCTION

As we stand on the threshold of the twenty-first century we have a vision for Adult learning, of learning for life, of learning being a continuous process and a part of daily life, of learning that releases the creative energies and enables an individual to actualize his potentials, of learning that facilitates participation in the democratic process and recognition of the importance of fundamental values of peace, justice and human rights, of learning that brings unity in cultural diversity and helps to resolve social issues.

In India, since ancient times, learning has been the basis of life itself. Learning is not for just daily living but for knowing one's Self so as to achieve unity with the supreme. All life's activities are to be woven around the achievement of this final goal. It is to begin with the mother who first initiates the child into the process of the pursuit of Truth with the Gayatri Mantra. Thereafter through the four stages of life namely those of studentship, of a householder, of retirement and of renunciation, learning is to be pursued through the acquisition of knowledge from the Guru, through application in daily life, through intellection, contemplation and finally through meditation to acquire knowledge of the Supreme - Truth.

The importance attributed to life-long learning is reflected in the various

cultural traditions of India some of which were the academic assemblies of the learned seers which were open to the general public, the intellectual tournaments or public debates on various social and ethical issues, the wandering monks who taught the people, the kathas or stories and parables enacted through drama and dance which transmitted knowledge and culture and the learned maulivi or muslim religious teacher holding sessions to answer questions on a wide variety of issues raised by common man.

However in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, during the subjugation by the British, there was a gradual break down of the traditional system of education where the boy and girl had equal opportunities for learning; till in 1836 only 6% of India's population was literate.

PART - II

INITIAL EFFORTS IN THE COUNTRY

The country has made several efforts in the last one century to once again make learning the basis of life itself. The first major attempt to raise the level of literacy in the country is seen in 1882 when the Education Commission recommended that night schools like those in Bombay, Madras and Bengal be opened in all the provinces of the country. Efforts to raise the level of education in the early part of the 20th century are seen in Gokhale's presentation of a Bill to the Parliament for free and compulsory primary education. This Bill was rejected by the British Government. Then in 1916 SNDT Women's University introduced the 'private student' method to facilitate women to appear for a University exam after studying privately at home. The level of women's literacy was only 2% at that time hence the efforts of SNDT Women's University were a landmark in women's education.

In 1921 the Indian leadership assumed control of education and by 1937 it was able to have Adult Education accepted as a responsibility of the Government. As a result the Adult Education Commission was appointed by the Central Advisory Board on Education (CABE) and the Bombay Adult Education Committee was established under the leadership of Shri B. G. Kher. The need for training literacy teachers, the motivational aspects, use of audio-visual materials and the retention of literacy skills through continuing education were now recognized.

Around this time Rabindranath Tagore, introduced learning through extension work through the self-help and mutual help educational programmes wherein collective action was undertaken by the students and the community for the community's developments. Mahatma Gandhi too moved a resolution on Basic Education in his Wardha Scheme of Education where he stressed on compulsory primary education.

A literacy campaign was also undertaken by the University of Mysore and an effort to teach illiteracy was made by Dr. Zakir Hussain through the Adult Education Department of the Jamia Milia in Delhi. Thus much before independence itself the University system had begun to involve itself in Adult learning.

Another event of significance in Adult Education at that time in 1939, was the establishment of the Indian Adult Education Association, an all-India voluntary organisation. The Adult Education Association tried to aim at not only literacy but at the improvement in the quality of life of the adult. It tried to have adult education recognized as an essential component of development.

In 1944 when there were ninety million illiterates (10-40 years) in the country, the Sargent Report, presented to the CABE for educational reconstruction, recommended that both non-vocational and vocational courses be organised for these illiterates. This was the first time when the importance of vocational programmes for illiterate adults was recognized.

After independence there being a general acceptance of the broader

concept of adult education it was further developed by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad into Social Education as a programme for the education of the masses. Social Education aiming at the education for the complete man included, besides literacy, an improvement in the quality of life of an individual, training for citizenship, training in health and hygiene and learning how to live in harmony with the environment. The idea of taking the social education movement to the masses was tried out in an experiment from 1959 to 1969, when an attempt was made to mobilise the people on a mass scale to undertake literacy through the Gram Shikshan Mohim in Maharashtra. This campaign was able to build an environment and mobilise resources in the villages but there was only the achievement of low levels of literacy and a considerable relapse into illiteracy due to a lack of follow-up programmes.

In 1967-68, a co-ordinated attempt was made by the Ministry of Agriculture, Information and Broadcasting and the Ministry Education to impart training and functional literacy to farmers in the areas where a programme for developing a high yielding variety of crop was being conducted.

By 1971 the literacy level had risen to 29.5 % from 16.7% in 1951. Another attempt was made in later years of 1975-76 to launch non-formal education programmes for non-school going children and out-of-school youth and adults. These were all attempts to link education with development programmes as it was now generally accepted that illiteracy was the reason for the failure of many developmental programmes such as agricultural production, Panchayati Raj, universalisation of elementary education and that illiteracy was also responsible for the mass poverty.

PART - III

EFFORTS BY THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

Though by 1970 some universities had already established, Departments for continuing education and begun to offer courses on their own, the University Grants Commission (UGC) recognized that if the vision of life - long learning was to be achieved then it must make adult and continuing education and extension an integral part of the system of Higher Education itself. It also recognized that if it was to prevent the student from becoming a mere 'Ivory Tower' product alienated from the common man's struggle for survival in the harsh environment of social problems then extension work too must become an integral part of the student's academic programme. The UGC also recognized that the paucity of resources in the country placed a responsibility on the University system to extend its knowledge, material and manpower resources to the community for its benefit be it for enhancing education or for development or for the resolution of social issues.

Hence in 1977 while framing its policy for Higher Education the UGC incorporated adult and continuing education and extension when it stated. :

> "If the University system has to discharge adequately its responsibilities to the entire educational system and to society as a whole, it must assume extension as the third important responsibility and given it the same status as teaching and research. This new and extremely significant area, should be developed on the basis of high priority."

It further stated that the programme of extension should benefit the community and the higher education system in order to promote meaningful and sustained support between the University and the Community. Extension was to pervade all sectors of the University system so that it became an integral part of the academic life of the students and teachers. It was also to encourage the development of a scientific temper and become a process of life-centered life-long learning.

On October 2, 1978, when in a significant step in the post-independence era the National Adult Education Programme was launched with a target of covering one hundred million illiterates (age 15-35) within the next five years, the UGC took this opportunity to institutionalise adult learning, link extension with national development and begin the translation of the policy of Extension into practice. It asked Universities to set up a Cell for Adult Education which was provided with hundred percent financial support and was to involve students and teachers in its literacy field programmes.

In 1982 when, on the basis of the recommendations of the Kothari Education Commission, adult education was included in the minimum needs programme in the sixth five year plan and in the 20 point programme of the Prime Minister, the UGC, supporting the national efforts, issued specific guidelines for extension work wherein it took a step beyond the basic literacy programme. In the guidelines, alongwith adult education, the focus was on the development of need-based educational programmes leading to self-reliance through self-employment. The target clientele for such programmes were women and the weaker sections. In

keeping with this thrust special extension programmes for continuing education, population education and rural development were also introduced.

The UGC took a step further in 1983 when it converted the Cells for Adult Education into full-fledged University Departments of Adult and Continuing Education and Extension. All the Extension programmes in a University such as eradication of illiteracy, population education, continuing education, planning forum, legal literacy, science for the people, environmental education, etc. were now brought under the umberella of this Department. By this time 83 universities were conducting the extension programmes through their Departments in over 2000 colleges. In 1985 an assessment of the progress made revealed that a conducive atmosphere for extension had been created in the universities.

At this stage major steps were taken in two directions. Firstly the National Policy for Education (1986) laid stress on adult education when it stated :

> "The whole Nation must pledge itself to the eradication of illiteracy, particularly in the 15-35 age group. The Central and State Governments, Political parties, other mass organisations, the mass media and educational institutions must commit themselves to mass literacy programmes of diverse nature."

The NPE also recognized the importance the of continuing education by stating :

> "Continuing Education is an indispensable aspect of the strategy of human resource development and creation of a learning society."

It went further to recognize extension as the third dimension equal in importance to teaching and research, the other two dimensions of the university system, when it stated :

> "All post secondary educational institutions including universities, colleges and polytechnics - will be expected to give extension work the same importance as they do to instruction. Extension programmes would include mass education as well as systematic courses of continuing education for the work force and professionals."

To facilitate the translation of policy into practice it included extension work in the role of a teacher when it said :

> "Teachers have multiple roles to perform : teaching, research, development of learning resource material, extension and managing the institution."

The second direction in which steps were taken was the formation of a UGC Review Committee for Extension which explicitly gave the strategies for the institutionalisation of extension in a University. This Committee stated that institutionalisation of extension required academic acceptance. This would be automatically ensured only when the activities entered at a stage of studies and research which enlarged understanding and contributed to knowledge. This could be done through incorporation in the undergraduate courses such as the applied or Foundation courses, through project-work or a field-based dissertation at undergraduate and post-graduate levels, through post-graduate courses with a research component related to extension in the form of case-studies and

through M. Phil, Ph. D. and post-doctoral programmes in extension. It recommended that 25% of the curricular time be allocated for extension.

To bring extension at par with teaching and research the Departments of Adult and Continuing Education and Extension were now to be developed into a Centre or Faculty for Non-Formal education and were to be of an inter-disciplinary nature. They were to be brought at par with the post-graduate departments. The academic staff in these Departments were now required to have qualifications at par with teachers of other disciplines and were to be given the same status and service facilities as them.

While the National Policy for Education forged ahead with measures for recognizing adult and continuing education and extension as an important component of the education in the country, nationally too further steps were taken to accelerate the pace of eradication of illiteracy.

In the early eighties the National Directorate of Adult Education and State Resource Centres had been established. Now the Government also took two major steps. The first step was the launching of the Mass Programme for Functional Literacy, (MPFL) in May 1986 with a view to involving the people and the student youth in particular, in the eradication of illiteracy through the each-one teach-one projects.

In a second major step the National Literacy Mission (NLM) was launched by the Prime Minister in May 1988, making literacy one of the Technology Missions for the country. The Mission visualised two approaches, viz., the random approach

through the Mass Programme for Functional Literacy (MPFL) and the systematic approach through the establishment of Adult Education Centres (AEC). Both these stages of imparting basic literacy were to be supported by follow-up programmes to be conducted at the Jana Shikshan Nilayam (JSN) or Community Education Centre (CEC).

In 1988 several attempts were made to make adult education a 'peoples movement' through mass mobilisation. Here a unique feature is the participation of the universities in a systematic and organised manner. Notable among the attempts nationally and among the universities was the Saksharta Abhiyan of Gujarat Vidyapeeth led by the Vice-Chancellor, Shri. Ramlalbhai parikh, winner of the Nehru Literacy Award. Through the Abhiyan 100 voluntary agencies under the leadership of the University were involved to undertake a rapid literacy programme of 90 days duration. Another notable attempt was of the Mahatma Gandhi University which undertook the eradication of illiteracy in Kotayam district under the leadership of Vice-Chancellor Prof. Ananthamoorthy.

In the University system the attempt to impart literacy was also made through the National Service Scheme alongwith the Departments of Adult and Continuing Education and EXtension. In 1988 35% of the NSS students were involved in MPFL and in 1989 some of the NSS camps were devoted to building up an environment for literacy.

Thus, the University system forged further ahead in linking extension with national development and sensitizing its students and teachers to the socio-cultural realities. At the same time, besides supporting the national efforts for

adult literacy, to implement the recommendations of the Review Committee and for ensuring the continuous flow of knowledge from the University to the community, in 1989, the UGC instructed that all extension programmes be conducted in an area or community, adopted by a University Department or an affiliated college. This initiated the development of a relationship between the university, college and community. Colleges were provided with grants to open a Community Education Centre (Jana Shikshan Nilayam) in the community. This Centre was in effect to function as the Extension Centre of the college.

In 1992 to further strengthen the university, college, community relationship, the university extension departments were asked to ensure that the communities adopted by colleges were eradicated of illiteracy and that continuing education courses and programmes were conducted on a regular basis. The role of extension departments was further highlighted as that of being a technical resource centre and training centre for extension services as well as a centre for innovations and action research in extension. To consolidate the work being carried out by the Departments, to facilitate monitoring and co-ordination at the regional level, to encourage networking, sharing and the development of leadership, the UGC identified thirteen Departments to act as Nodal Agencies on its behalf. The establishment of the Nodal Agencies was a unique structure which very much facilitated the flow of information from the now 104 Departments working through 2,600 colleges. It brought forth the fact that about ten universities, besides conducting the extension programmes, had begun to offer a post-graduate diploma in Adult and Continuing Education and Extension and M. A., M. Phil. and Ph. D. degrees in adult education.

In further supporting the national efforts for the eradication of illiteracy the UGC accepted the Total Literacy Campaign (TLC) approach followed by the National Literacy Mission and encouraged closed co-ordination between the Departments, Non-Government Organizations and the Government Agencies. Several Departments were totally involved in the Total Literacy Campaigns (TLCs), in their organisation, training of volunteers, environment building, etc. and a large number of students and teachers were mobilised to participate in this national effort.

As can be seen in a quick glance at the efforts made, in the period of a century, adult learning has gradually found a place of significance in the education scene. Its importance in the development of the nation has been recognized. It has come to be established more firmly with the formation of the National Mission. There are State Resource Centres which now prepare the necessary materials and undertake training of functionaries. District Institutes for Education and Training (DIET) and District Resource Units have been set up intensifying the efforts. Departments of Adult and Continuing Education and Extension have been established in 50% of universities. The efforts of students and teachers in the higher education system have been secured and will continue to be secured through voluntary involvement. Inspite of all the efforts nationally and by the University system in particular, literacy has risen only from 16.7 % in 1951 to 52.21% in 1991. The female illiteracy is still an alarming 60.71 %

PART - IV

THE SITUATION TODAY

Before making projections for the possible role of Universities in adult learning in the early part of 21st century, it is essential that an assessment of the current scenario be made.

India has one of the biggest systems of education in the world. The University system which had 27 Universities, 750 colleges, 12,000 teachers and 2,50,000 students in 1950 has now grown to 250 Universities, 9000 colleges, 3,00,000 teachers and 6,000,000 students. Though very large in absolute terms, the enrollment hardly covers about 6% of the relevant age group of 17-24 years. On the other hand 320.41 million illiterates (1991 Census) have to be provided with basic literacy and follow-up continuing education programmes. Of the 250 universities only 104 have Departments of Adult and Continuing Education and Extension and involve only 2,600 out of the 9,000 colleges in the field outreach programmes.

A recent review of the work of the Nodal Agencies and the Departments has shown that the co-ordination and monitoring by the Nodal Agency structure has facilitated the work of the Departments in its service area. In some universities Vice-Chancellors have begun to take direct interest in the growth and function of the Departments and active Advisory Committees are in existence. Some Departments are deeply involved with the National Literacy Mission (NLM) in training, organisation and external evaluation of the Total Literacy Campaigns

(TLCs). A few Departments show excellent performance with even a minimum core staff. Some are mainly engaged in the conduct of degree and diploma programmes and a few have developed a range of continuing education courses.

However a majority of the Departments continue to remain outside the main academic framework of post-graduate Departments and are still treated as a 'UGC scheme'. State Governments which had been persuaded to support the Departments as permanent structures inside the university, have now taken over only about fifty percent of the departments which have therefore only in 1997 become permanent in nature. The major drawback that still exists is the non-recognition of the core academic staff as 'teachers' and their continued treatment as 'administrative project staff'. The other drawback is the sense of insecurity due to the impermanent or 'scheme' status of the core staff in 50% of the Departments which inhibits their whole-hearted contribution to the cause of adult learning.

The University academia continue to consider teaching and research as superior to extension relegating it repeatedly to the status of a co-curricular activity. Though the UGC has given a Policy for extension, universities are yet to develop their own specific policies with the special thrusts they visualise. In the absence of any such action by the university itself, the core staff of the Department is left alone to single handedly make an impact about the importance of extension, Adult and Life-Long Learning on the entire academic body of the University.

Participation of students in extension work programmes is considered as equal to participation in co-curricular activities and for teachers it is only an 'extra work-load' which does not in anyway contribute to their upward career mobility. An equation between 'teaching work-load' and 'extension work-load' has yet to be developed.

First in order to consolidate what has been achieved by the University system in the last two decades and to iron out the anamolies mentioned above, the UGC is already trying to persuade the Planning Commission to provide financial support to Universities so as to enable them to fulfill their special role in Non-Formal Education. Efforts are underway to redesignate the core academic staff as teachers. The Nodal Agencies are to be provided with additional facilities so as to enable them to carry out their defined role more effectively. The UGC also proposes to conduct special training and refresher courses so that university academia and the core academic staff are better equipped for the further enhancement of Adult Learning in the 21st century.

PART - V

VISION FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Even as the UGC consolidates its efforts of the last two decades in institutionalising adult and continuing education and extension, as one stands at the threshold of the twenty-first century it becomes imperative to take a fresh look and redefine the role of the university system if it is to achieve its goal of making learning the basis of life itself. Though one talks of education for change, in reality the universities have been mainly concerned with the transmission of cognitive knowledge and evaluation of the extent of transfer through an examination system. Universities are more engaged in setting up new departments, establishing new disciplines, handling increasing student enrollment, administrative problems, etc. than in promoting education for social change.

For the University system to achieve its ultimate goal of making learning the basis of an individual's life it must first work for the promotion of social change and development. To achieve this the system must address itself to urgent social issues such as health, welfare, women, transfer of appropriate technology to the community, etc. It must reach out to the community through extension work and bring those groups within its fold which would otherwise never enter a university or a college. And if it is to promote development it must first ensure that the education it offers increases employability and that too, first of the university student who is its primary product.

Even as the University system works for social change and development it

must generate new knowledge, not through pure research alone but through interaction with the community so as to bring about the necessary modifications in theories and make the curriculum more relevant to the life of the people. For this it will have to follow a decentralised tailor-made approach which will engender and promote innovation and creativity through relevance to real life problems. Only then will the system, be able to go beyond the transmission of cognitive knowledge, to the transmission of relevant knowledge, skills and values using multiple learning avenues and the dimension of extension education.

Therefore the UGC proposes to first address itself to major social issues such as :

* Illiteracy, wastage, school drop-outs and non-enrollment.
* Bonded labour, child-labour and street children
* Ill health, poor nutrition, sanitation, drinking water and environmental issues such as pollution, deforestation, etc.
* Gender issues, family life education, drugs, AIDs
* Human rights, communal harmony, development of cohesive unity in diversity
* Increasing skills for employment and self employment so as to increase incomes.
* Transfer of appropriate technologies to communities.

The UGC is also recasting its Policy for Continuing Education so that the elements of a learning society can begin early in life. Such a Policy proposes to

primarily cover the common man's needs for education through a national, provincial and local network of continuing education with a broad variety of local providers who will become a part of the network. Through such a Policy it is hoped that education will become a factor for social change and technological progress while continuing to transmit a cultural heritage even as it is closely linked with fulfilling the needs of the employment market.

If the universities are to actively address themselves to social issues and translate a dynamic continuing education policy into practice then first of all they must sensitize their own students and fraternity. This is proposed to be achieved by making extension an integral part of all the disciplines. All the teaching departments of a university are to have field programmes and project staff for their execution. Only then will interaction with the community bring forth new ideas, new programmes and new experiments to motivate the beneficiaries. Only then will it be possible for restructuring curriculum for change.

The vision for continuing education, therefore, is to become an integral part of university education and outreach work a tool for its involvement in the broader struggles within society. Hence the UGC's Mission for the early part of the 21st century is :

> Through adult and continuing education and extension promote the socio-economic development of the country, improve the quality of life of individuals and families and achieve optimum human resource development.

The major thrusts are to be to :

* Work towards the acceptance of a philosophy of continuing education, extension and field outreach programmes
* Try to achieve closer integration between formal and non-formal education
* Reach out to a larger section of adults particularly of the deprived groups
* Through the experience gained in interaction with the community to make educational content relevant to learners through curriculum reform
* Enrich the learning process of the students and faculty through exposure to the socio-cultural realities

For fulfilling its Mission the major objectives of UGC will be the conduct of :

1. Vocational / Career Oriented Programmes.
2. Equivalency programmes which will lead to the development of a parallel programme of a degree or diploma.
3. Quality of life improvement programmes.
4. Total literacy and post-literacy modules.
5. Leadership and human resource development programmes.

6. Programmes for social and citizenship role awareness.

7. Individual interest programmes.

For bringing its Mission to reality the first step that UGC proposes to undertake will be that of ensuring that adult, continuing education, extension and outreach become a part of the work-load of both the teachers and students.

Such a step will make it possible to ensure that the Department of Adult and Continuing Education and Extension can bring to fruition its role which shall now be specifically more interdisciplinary and interdepartmental. Besides the Department's earlier role of training, acting as a technical resource centre, conducting various field programmes, the Department will be the focal agency in the University for initiating and executing the extension programmes. It will also be the agency to develop and teach the techniques of androgogy. The Department will also now more actively undertake innovation and research and liaison more closely with Government departments of women and Child Development, Social Welfare, Health, etc. for actively addressing the social issues.

The role of the Nodal Agencies would be more than just that of co-ordinating and monitoring. It would be that of a Regional Resource Centre and an Information Clearing House. it would also act as a centre for the development of curriculum units.

The UGC also proposes to ensure that all the 250 universities eventually have

Departments of Adult and Continuing Education and Extension so that Adult Learning will not only become a part of the university system but also so that it will be able to more actively support the country's efforts in fulfilling the learning needs of the 320.41 million illiterates and the continuing education needs of all its people.

Thus the University system in India shall be playing an active role in promoting Adult Learning in the 21st Century.

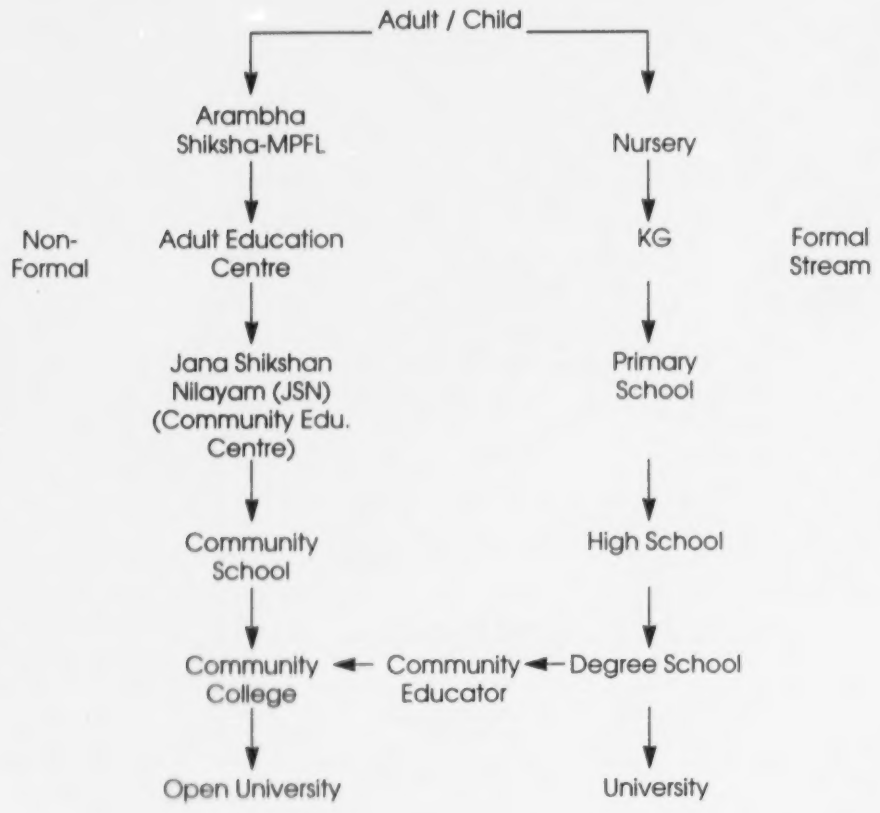
PART VI

THE DEPARTMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MUMBAI

The ultimate test of a visionary policy lies in its translation into practice at the grass root level. The UGC Policy can be considered to be successful when it is translated into action by the Departments in their work with the teachers and students in the community. An example, of the moderate success achieved in translating policy into practice is that of the Department of Adult and Continuing Education and Extension of the University of Mumbai.

Established in 1978, the Department in its first ten years focussed mainly on the literacy programmes, training of functionaries, preparation of primers, teaching aids, etc. It was in 1987 that the Department, taking an indepth look at the UGC policy statement for extension, the recommendations of the Parikh Committee, the programme possibilities of the area-based approach, the access it had to students, teachers and colleges and the role being played by the various agencies in the University for carrying out community work, indentified for itself two major goals namely that of the institutionalisation of extension and the creation of a non-formal stream of education.

It put forth a design for non-formal stream of education as given below :



In this stream any individual could join at a any age, at any level and at any time of the year to achieve a level of education at his own pace. An individual could rejoin the stream at any point of interruption without having to repeat a class. Instruction and evaluation was to be conducted at the convenience of the people involved and was to be based on application to daily life situations and problem-solving.

With no special manpower or funds available the Department took the various programmes of Mass Programme for Functional Literacy (MPFL), Adult Education Centre (AEC), Jana Shikshan Nilayam (JSN) and population education for activating the stream. It commenced its efforts by opening the first Jana Shikshan Nilayam of the country in 1987 itself.

To operationalise the stream it linked its execution with extension work by the students. This linkage was also to achieve two more purposes; that of the extension of knowledge, material and manpower facilities of Higher Education to the community for its benefit and that of sensitizing the students and teachers to the socio-cultural realities. For institutionalising extension the recommendation of the Parikh Committee of utilising Project work for ensuring academic acceptance was identified as the strategy to be used. Use of Project Work would also ensure quality work while facilitating monitoring and evaluation of the field work of students.

Through a series of workshops and training programmes for college principals, teachers and students the Department was able to introduce Project Work by 1990. It developed fourteen different types of projects which were all directly related to the execution of the literacy, continuing education courses, Jana Shikshan Nilayam (JSN) or population education programmes. In its efforts in developing project work as a strategy it was assisted by the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration.

Academic acceptance of Project work was gained when, on the recommendations of the college Principals the Academic Council approved the allocation of ten additional marks to a student who successfully completed one

hundred and twenty hours of work in the Project. This academic acceptance led to an increase in the number of colleges, teachers and students participating in extension work. In another step forward adult and continuing education and extension achieved incorporation in the undergraduate degree course when it was included as a unit of study in the revised Foundation Course. The orientation of the Foundation Course teachers led to the doubling of teachers involved and a threefold increase in student enrollment in the Department's projects.

To ensure that teachers had assistance in the execution of extension both at the college and community level, to develop leadership among the students and for ensuring that at least some students, undergraduate and B.Ed teacher trainees, had indepth knowledge about extension, the Department developed a cadre called the student Project Manager. Today this cadre with a modicum of a theoretical base and intensive field experience has become the backbone of extension work in the colleges.

To bring forth the work of the colleges, to encourage sharing and networking, to achieve learning in a non-formal way and to focus on specific social issues the Department began organising an Annual Festival. Using the fun element, competitions and games the students were encouraged to focus on social issues for finding possible solutions in local settings. These festivals brought about learning of values which could not have been achieved in a classroom setting. Today these festivals become a major attraction for the students.

By 1991 the work of the Department had drawn the attention of UGC. It was a great moment for the Department when both the Chairman and Vice-

Chairman of UGC visited the Department in 1992 for directly interacting with Principals, teachers and students to gain first hand knowledge about the work being carried out. They personally commended the work of the Department.

In 1992 when the UGC identified its thirteen Nodal Agencies, the Department was nominated as the Nodal Agency for the States of Maharashtra and Goa. It was then able to play a bigger role at the regional level.

Now, at this time, in 1992, when the field strategies and funding pattern for adult education were changed from the area-based-approach to the Total Literacy Campaign approach, the Department found its efforts in developing the non-formal stream of education being interrupted. This was so because it had been totally dependent on the UGC funding and it had woven the development of the Non-Formal Education (NFE) stream around the earlier area-based approach strategies. Again in 1995 when the UGC grants to the Department were reduced by 90% due to a national resource crunch, the Department's efforts were further affected. Therefore the Department was required to recast its strategies if it was to fulfill its goal of operationalising the Non Formal Education (NFE) stream.

Another significant but forward moving step at this time, at the state level and unique to our State of Maharashtra, was the integration of extension into the total academic framework of the university with the introduction of the New Maharashtra Universities Act. Through this Act a Board of Adult and Continuing Education and Extension Services was now to be set up as one of the Authorities in the University. The Department which had so far remained as a 'Miscellaneous

UGC Scheme' on the periphery of the University was now brought into the mainstream and was given a statutory status. The Director of the Department, by virtue of the Act, became an ex-officio member, of the University Senate. This integration of adult and continuing education and extension into the University through legislation, has given the Department a strong base to ensure the achievement of parity with the post-graduate departments. It also provided the Department a platform for fulfilling its role as visualised by UGC.

As mentioned earlier the Department had to recast its strategies before moving further. The major decisions now taken by the Department in the light of all the changes were :

* to become financially self sufficient.
* to develop the Non Formal Education (NFE) stream by devising its own strategies.
* to ensure an equation of extension work with instruction through the development of the discipline.
* to design programmes which increased the employability of the students.
* to focus on women, girl-child the depressed classes and students as its target clientele.

Hence in 1995 the Department organised a seminar on the 'Maharashtra Policy for Women : Universities as catalytic agents' in collaboration with the State Government's Department of Women and Child Development. The impact of this seminar was seen in the development of a series of extension projects only on

women's issues and the incorporation of a unit of study on women's studies in the courses being offered by some of the disciplines in the University. It also led to the conduct of a some short term continuing education courses specially for women and increase in the popularity of the Population Education Club programme being conducted at the college level.

In 1995 the Department also conducted a workshop on 'Developing linkages between universities, business and industry'. This workshop led to the development of the Work Experience Projects for students which resulted in increasing the employability of the student. These projects are gaining popularity particularly with rural colleges having industries adjacent to them.

To bring extension at par with instruction and for achieving financial self-sufficiency, the Department now placed a proposal before the Board for the introduction of a 'participation charge' for extension as is done for academic programmes of instruction justifying that a fee was required for meeting the expenses to be incurred in the training of teachers, monitoring the field work, correction of Project Work, etc. The approval of the proposal led not only to an income being generated for the Department for developing the discipline but at the college level efficiency in execution increased as with a charge being collected from the student the teachers were also now more accountable for the efficient execution of the extension projects.

For consolidating the efforts made, the Annual Festival of December 1995 had as its central theme women's issues and enterprenership. This occasion achieved the sensitization of the students to social issues and gave them an opportunity to try their hand at setting up shop for selling products prepared by the community or

by themselves. It also proved to be particularly popular with them. Subsequently in the Festival of December 1996 issues on democracy and cultural unity were also included so that a broader ranger of social issues were covered.

The efforts of the Department have paid of as adult and continuing education and extension, women's studies, population education and environmental studies have been introduced as optional papers in the B.Ed. course, that is, at the pre-service level of teacher education. A field component of twenty marks has also been introduced in the course thus making the B.Ed. course as the first degree course in the university to formally integrate Adult Learning and field outreach programmes. At the undergraduate level the university shall be introducing project work of thirty marks from 1998-99. The Department is already making efforts to see that such project work stresses on social issues and work experience. It's success will mean the formal intergration of field outreach programmes in the graduate degree programme too.

In 1996 the Department also refined its training of Student Managers into a Certificate Course in Project Management. 27 students successfully completed the course in April 1997.

As a Nodal Agency in the State, the Department besides co-ordinating and monitoring the work of the Departments since 1992, also broke fresh ground with Goa University helping it to introduce a one hundred marks paper in project work at the final year of the graduate degree. It also published a study on the effect of the implementation of the UGC guidelines of 1992 in its service area. Today besides Goa University, Nagpur University has also introduced project work in extension following the model developed by the Department.

Taking a quick overview of what the Department does today one can say that it is

1. Improving the quality of learning through its training programmes and the development of courses on adult and continuing education and extension.

2. Fostering learning of democracy, social justice, respect for different cultures and human values through its Annual Festivals.

3. Facilitating the empowerment of women through its range of extension projects and the establishment of a Women's Cell.

4. Further strengthening adult learning for entry into the world of work through its work-experience projects.

5. Ensuring learning about health environment and population issues through its Population Education Clubs.

6. Fulfilling the need for continuing education through the conduct of short term courses.

7. Taking steps to further develop the Certificate Course in Project Management into a Certificate Course in the discipline.

8. Promoting Adult Learning at the regional level through execution of its role and functions as a Nodal Agency and helping other universities to break new ground.

What does the Department propose to do in the future. Of course it shall

continue to :

* Struggle to gain parity with post-graduate teaching departments.
* Make efforts to further institutionalise extension
* Develop the discipline of adult and continuing education and extension and offer courses on population education, women's studies and environmental studies.
* Further develop the work-experience projects in liaison with business and industry.
* Work towards the development of a range of continuing education courses

and so on.

But more than anything else the Department proposes to work on the development of an institution where any individual can join for education at any level right from literacy to the Open University; where a person will be free to choose from a wide range of courses, where an individual will be able to collect credits towards a qualification while learning at his own pace, where multimode delivery systems will be used, where the teachers will be a wide range of community experts and where the students will be the common man who has missed the opportunity for education.

It is with such a dream that the Department moves forth into the twenty-first century.

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